



Frosted Lotus Pods by Cherrie Corey

Public Comments

The Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan was distributed to all Town Boards, Commissions, Committees, employees, and distributed widely throughout the community through the town website, newspaper, and email. Electronic and paper copies were made available. This section includes public comments and letters of support received on the draft Plan.

In mid-November 2014, the public was invited to review and provide input on the draft 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan, posted online with hard copies made available upon request. Feedback was received and incorporated into this final Plan. The comments received were encouraging and demonstrated the importance of open space and recreation to Concordians; that so many people were carefully reading this robust report and providing such thoughtful comments is a testament to resident's commitment to open space and recreation.

Fifteen residents attended the public presentation of the draft Plan on December 18, 2014, at the Harvey Wheeler Center, where large format maps were displayed along with a Power Point presentation of the Plan and process. Additional interest was voiced, but many, having been involved throughout the process, did not feel compelled to attend. Many of

the comments received at the public meeting suggested including comparative information regarding development to evaluate the achievements in land preservation that has occurred over the previous ten years.

Letters of review from the Planning Board, chief elected officials, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, are required before the plan can obtain approval from the State of Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services. Additional letters from Town Boards, Commissions, Committees, as well as local and regional partners and the general public are included in this section.

Approval of this plan is required from the Division of Conservation Services, and will make Concord eligible to participate in grant rounds for the next seven years.



OLD NORTH BRIDGE

TOWN OF CONCORD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S OFFICE
22 MONUMENT SQUARE - P.O. BOX 535
CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01742

TELEPHONE (978) 318-3001
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January 7, 2015

Natural Resources Commission, Jeffrey Adams, Chair
Planning Board, John Shipe Chair
Recreation Commission, Susanne Jarnryd, Chair

Concord's 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan presents a comprehensive survey and inventory of the Town's valued forests, uplands, wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers and streams, meadows and agricultural lands. This update to prior years' plans incorporates not only the risk posed by development, but addresses the potential impacts of a changing climate. Improved GIS capability since the last plan has resulted in much richer maps having been developed and included in this plan.

The 2015 plan includes a 20 year retrospective of changes in the Town that were either the result of town efforts or those of partnering land and conservation organizations. Appendix H chronicles these events and accomplishments that have affected Concord's natural resources. Further, the report reviews the recommendations of the 2004 plan and notes the progress towards achieving many of those goals.

At its conclusion, the plan provides a Seven Year Action Plan that will serve as the aspirational guideposts for Concord. Key opportunities were identified under each of the four resource planning goals:

- 1) Protect water resources and biodiversity
- 2) Improve connectivity and access to recreational resources
- 3) Protect agricultural land including fields, meadows and orchards
- 4) Improve collaboration and land management.

The Board of Selectmen commends the efforts of the Planning, Natural Resources and Recreational Departments in developing this forward looking plan and supports the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan and its Open Space Framework.

Very truly yours,

Steven Ng, Chair
Concord Board of Selectmen



TOWN OF CONCORD

Planning Board

141 Keyes Road, Concord, MA 01742

(978) 318-3290

To: Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee
From: Planning Board
cc: Natural Resources Commission
Re: **Draft 2014 Open Space & Recreation Plan**
Date: December 17, 2014

In reviewing the draft Plan, the Board offers only two comments in Section 9, Seven-Year Action Plan;

- 1) In reference to promoting handheld hoses for watering and the use of rain barrels by residents in Goal 1.B.3(b) and B3(c), the Board questions the usefulness and/or effectiveness of the Planning Board being a responsible party since we are very rarely, if ever, working directly with individual property owners at this level.
- 2) In reference to continuing to protect open space near well-heads in Goal 1.B.4, the Board is not listed as a responsible party. While there is currently language in the Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Rules & Regulations regarding aquifer protection, the Board believes there is always an opportunity to review these regulations in the future to make sure the Town is doing all it can to protect our water supplies.
- 3) In reference to promoting large-lot zoning to protect agricultural soils in Goal 3.B.3, the Board notes this goes against sustainable planning principals and recommends this goal be to explore a range of zoning options to protect agricultural soils.

As was noted by the Planning Board in 2004, this Plan creates a positive framework for the next seven years. The Board believes that the recommendations and implementation of the Open Space & Recreation Plan will need to be reviewed within the context of the broader elements of the Comprehensive Long Range Plan update that will begin in the fall of 2015 so there is a balanced approach to all aspects that go into making a vibrant and healthy community.

The Planning Board would like to thank all of the members of the Open Space & Recreation Plan Update Committee for their dedication and perseverance to a challenging task and the superb quality of the draft Plan is a testament to your commitment.

On behalf of the Planning Board,

Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner



SMART GROWTH AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

January 5, 2015

Lori Capone
Assistant Natural Resources Director
141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Ms. Capone:

Thank you for submitting the "2014 Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan" to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for review.

The Division of Conservation Services (DCS) requires that all open space plans must be submitted to the regional planning agency for review. This review is advisory and only DCS has the power to approve a municipal open space plan. While DCS reviews open space plans for compliance with their guidelines, MAPC reviews these plans for their attention to regional issues generally and more specifically for consistency with *MetroFuture*, the regional policy plan for the Boston metropolitan area.

The draft plan is very comprehensive and represents a high level of detail and a thorough grounding in the natural environment of the town. The plan is highly consistent with *MetroFuture* and it should serve the town well as it continues its efforts to preserve open space and provide for the recreational needs of its residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this plan.

Sincerely

Marc D. Draisen
Executive Director

Cc: Melissa Cryan, Division of Conservation Services



TOWN OF CONCORD
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
141 KEYES ROAD, CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01742
TEL. (978) 318-3285 FAX (978) 318-3291

December 17, 2014

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee
141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742

RE: 2014 Open Space Recreation Plan

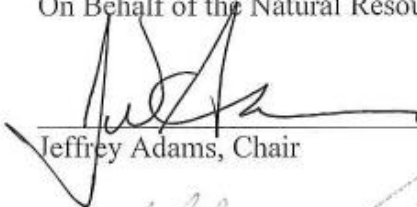
The Natural Resources Commission would like to thank the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee and the Department of Natural Resources for completing a comprehensive update to the 2004 Plan. The 2014 update offers enhanced maps and graphics which clearly identify existing conditions and future opportunities for land and natural resource protection and recreational use.

The Plan examines open space in Concord from a regional perspective, town wide evaluation and neighborhood viewpoint and recommends prudent steps to protect and manage open space.

The Natural Resources Commission wholeheartedly endorses this update and encourages all town boards and committees to be familiar with the document and to annually review goals outlined in the Plan that are pertinent to their purview.

Many thanks to the Committee!

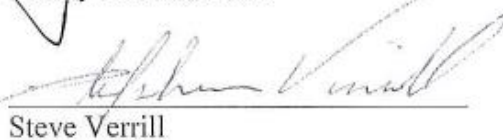
On Behalf of the Natural Resources Commission,



Jeffrey Adams, Chair



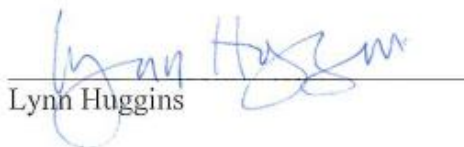
Elissa Brown



Steve Verrill



Greg Higgins



Lynn Huggins



HUNT • RECREATION • CENTER
90 STOW STREET • CONCORD, MA 01742 • (978) 369-6460 • FAX (978) 369-9403

Danner J. DeStephano
Recreation Director

December 16, 2014

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee
c/o Natural Resources Commission
141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Committee,

At the December 2, 2014 Recreation Commission meeting the Open Space and Recreation Plan was discussed. After a comprehensive review the Commission voted approval of the plan pending the recommended changes.

Sincerely,

Susanne Jarnryd
Chair, Recreation Commission



CONCORD BOARD OF HEALTH

141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742
Phone: (978) 318-3275
Fax: (978) 318-3281



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

December 16, 2014

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee
c/o Natural Resources Division
141 Keyes Rd.
Concord, MA 01742

Subject: Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Committee members,

The Board of Health has received and reviewed the November 2014 draft Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The plan is thorough and well-considered. The arrival of this plan at a time when the town is preparing to embark on updating its Comprehensive Long-Range Plan is very fortuitous. This enables the town and its many interested committees, individuals and organizations to work cooperatively towards community preservation, expanded recreational opportunities, and healthy community goals.

The Board of Health recognizes that your committee has worked diligently on this plan and we appreciate the dedication and thoughtfulness that were put into creating the plan in its current form. The Board of Health hereby endorses the draft plan. We look forward to receiving the final version and thank you for preparing such a useful and creative tool for planning for the town's future needs.

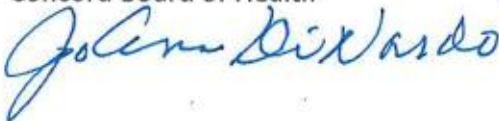
Sincerely,


Kerry Diskin, Chair

Jack Bergman


Alan Woodward

Joanne DiNardo
Concord Board of Health



MEMORANDUM

Date: January 10, 2015

To: Lori Capone and members of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee

From: Members of the West Concord Advisory Committee

Re: Open Space Recreation Plan

The West Concord Advisory Committee would like to thank the Natural Resources Division staff and members of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee for assembling the excellent Open Space and Recreation 2014 Update. We agree whole-heartedly with the four overarching goals of protecting large open spaces, enhancing connectivity and access to open space, protecting agricultural land, and improving collaboration and management of conservation land.

We would like to offer a few specific points of emphasis that reflect our efforts to maintain and improve the character and livability of West Concord:

- We fully support the action item B.4. under Goal 2 to “establish and enhance open spaces in and around the town centers, connected where feasible to town trail systems and public transportation, to improve walkability of the community.” While the Transfer of Development Rights bylaw described in Appendix B should be fully explored, further density in village centers should be accompanied by strategic open space protection near housing.
 - We strongly support the creation of neighborhood parks – small green spaces in an otherwise densely populated area. A small park serves a large population by providing open space within a short walkable distance. For example, the West Concord section of Concord includes a tightly developed neighborhood just west of Route 2, between Main Street and Old Marlboro Road and including Emerson, MacArthur, Orchard, Old Bridge, Bridge Court, Crest, Cottage, Staffordshire Lane and 220 units at Concord Greene. Rideout Playground, located on the opposite end of the West Concord Village, is the closest public open space to that neighborhood. But Rideout is 1.7 miles from Emerson Road, which is too long a walk for many children and even too far away for older children who are on their own. A small park at the available 1053 Main Street, as an example, would provide much needed open space within a short walk of hundreds of residents' homes. We believe that the Town's decision not to buy this parcel was a lost opportunity and recommend that the Town looks to take advantage of these opportunities when they arise in the future.
- We emphasize the need for trails and safe bicycling routes leading from developed residential areas to recreational facilities within West Concord and from West Concord to Concord Center.
 - The right-of-way path leading from Willard School south to the residential neighborhood is an excellent example of connecting a neighborhood to a recreational facility and

school. While Rideout Playground is a tremendous asset for West Concord, the Main Street/Central Street neighborhood is cut off from the playground by the rail line. Reaching the playground via Church Street and Commonwealth Avenue involves navigating a sharp corner at the train tracks and Conant Street has an uneven and narrow sidewalk (see photos attached). These pinch points complicate access for young children who would bicycle to the park with parents and for children who might otherwise be old enough to bicycle or walk to the playground on their own. We recommend a direct passage under or over the train line via town-owned land or through newly acquired land or easements.

- Action item A.1. under Goal 2 calls for reducing major impacts of Route 2, and action B.7. calls for enhancing bicycle access to Concord Center, but both neglect to mention connecting West Concord to Concord Center via Main Street. A nascent effort by West Concord middle schoolers to bike to school will most likely end when they reach high school age as the Route 2 crossing is currently too dangerous for unaccompanied young teens. Improvements at these crossings, or a dedicated bike path connecting Concord Center to West Concord, would greatly improve bike access between the two districts.
- We also fully support action item C under Goal 2, to establish a committee to conduct an in-depth study of potential improvements in resources and safety of bicycling in town. Of course, this study should consider bicycle use for commuting and errands as well as recreational riding. We offer our members as participants in this committee.
- The plan points out the potential for trail connections through town-owned land and easements along the south side of the Assabet River. We would add the need for an extension of this trail all the way to Route 62 on the west side of the Assabet River. This would necessitate a bridge across the Second Division Brook, but it could create a key pedestrian link between Main Street and the Harrington Avenue neighborhood. Ultimately, combined with a new pedestrian crossing on the downstream side of the Rt. 62 bridge over the Assabet River at Damon Mill, this connector trail could be part of a safe route to school for children going from the Main Street and Old Stow Road neighborhoods to the middle schools. Currently, the existing crossing and sidewalk at Harrington and Main Street is very dangerous and is a barrier to pedestrian traffic between these neighborhoods, which may result in the river trail being an underutilized destination, rather than a passage through town neighborhoods. Further, in its present state, this town conservation land is essentially walled off by abutting property owners, with no access from Route 62 which has no sidewalk on the south side here, has no nearby crosswalk, and is blocked by a guard rail.

Submitted on behalf of the West Concord Advisory Committee by Jeff Collins, Burton Flint and Steve Irza.



Conant Street approach to railroad crossing, looking south.



Conant Street crossing looking north.



Conant Street crossing looking south.



CONCORD LAND
CONSERVATION TRUST
Joan D. Ferguson, *Chairman*
Pauline Cross Reeve, *Vice Chairman*
Eleanor C. Horwitz
Lynn G. Huggins
Jonathan M. Keyes
Gordon H. Shaw
John M. Stevens, Jr.

Post Office Box 141
Concord, Massachusetts 01742-0141

CONCORD OPEN
LAND FOUNDATION
Thomas C. Tremblay, *President*
John Bemis
Lynn G. Huggins
F. Robert Parker

January 12, 2015

Delia Kaye, Natural Resources Director
Lori Capone, Assistant Natural Resources Director
Division of Natural Resources
141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742

Re: 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Delia and Lori,

I am pleased to submit this letter on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Concord Land Conservation Trust (CLCT) in support of the updated Open Space and Recreation Plan.

We are encouraged that the seven-year action plan includes improving connectivity of and access to recreational resources, protecting agricultural land including fields, meadows, and orchards, and improving collaboration and management so as to incorporate the Plan's goals in Town and community decision-making. CLCT has a shared interest in protecting otherwise unprotected parcels within large natural areas, and wildlife and water corridors.

The Plan is comprehensive and well-written and will serve as an important tool for guiding land use decisions by the Town, and supporting the efforts of local organizations such as CLCT to preserve large parcels of open space and parcels that connect other areas of open space.

Sincerely,

Joan D. Ferguson, Chairman





SUDBURY
VALLEY
TRUSTEES

Conservation, Collaboration, and Community since 1953

December 23, 2014

Lori Capone
Assistant Natural Resources Director
141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Ms. Capone:

Sudbury Valley Trustees is pleased to submit this letter in support of the Town of Concord's 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

As a partner on several local conservation efforts, SVT is an enthusiastic supporter of the work of the Concord Natural Resources Department. We applaud the efforts of the working group that developed this plan, for its design, impressive scope, and for the very ambitious goals set out in the seven year action plan. Of particular note is the emphasis placed on addressing potential impacts of climate change, as well as food and water security into the future.

We also appreciate that the plan looks far beyond Concord's borders to take a regional view of open space needs. SVT is currently undertaking a regional analysis that seeks to identify those parts of the Su-As-Co watershed that are most critical for conservation, and we look forward to sharing the results of that exercise with our Concord partners.

SVT supports your outstanding planning process to meet the Town's municipal needs, achieve balanced growth, and preserve the Town's unique character in the years ahead. We look forward to continued collaboration with Concord officials, staff, and volunteers to protect the important resources identified in your plan.

Sincerely,

Lisa Vernegaard
Executive Director



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Concord Agriculture Committee
Letter for inclusion in Town of Concord Open Space and Recreation Plan

The Town of Concord Agriculture Committee writes in appreciation for the considerable work that has gone into this update of the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Concord's "working lands" contribute significantly to our open spaces, providing a lively, scenic link with the town's agricultural heritage. Concord's farms and farm stands are not merely scenic, of course. They also strengthen and diversify the town's economic base, generating jobs and revenue that stay local. And, through the production of locally grown food, our farms are helping to build community resilience to deal with the effects of climate change.

The Agriculture Committee shares the concern, addressed in the OSRP, that unprotected agricultural land is particularly vulnerable to development. This land is usually flat, open, and located in a residential zone. The OSRP recommends two zoning strategies for preserving and promoting agricultural land—establishing Agricultural Overlay Districts, and permitting Transfers of Development Rights. While the Agriculture Committee is not able to assess the effectiveness of these strategies—there are few existing examples to review—it is ready to work with the Town Planning Zoning Board to explore these recommendations.

Until that time, the Committee believes that prioritizing Chapter 61A agricultural land to protect—an OSRP goal—warrants the Town's concerted effort. In 2004 there were 668 acres of land in the Chapter 61A program that were not also subject to a conservation restriction (CR) or an Agricultural Preservation Restriction. Ten years later, there are 351 such acres. The Town and land conservation trusts purchased 58 acres of the land that came out of Chapter 61A during this period. Most of the other land coming out of Chapter 61A has been developed or otherwise permanently taken out of agricultural use.

Providing some form of permanent protection for the 351 unprotected acres currently in the Chapter 61A program is critically important for preserving the remainder of Concord's agricultural land. Another key element of maintaining our working lands is conserving and extending the infrastructure on which a farm business depends. This infrastructure includes both access to water and electricity, and a variety of structures. The need for housing, so that Concord farmers and farm workers can live in the community where they work, is especially great.

The Committee notes that Concord's 2004 Long Range Plan urged the Town to establish and develop an Emergency Land Fund to acquire farmlands released from the Chapter program. The need for such a fund is no less urgent today. Through various land acquisition projects in the past decade, Concord has gained valuable experience and built collaborations among residents and institutions to maintain and enlarge a vibrant agricultural sector. The Agriculture Committee looks forward to working with other Town Boards and committees as well as Concord residents to secure agricultural use of our open space for the next seven years and beyond.

Agriculture Committee 2014-2015: Emily Wheeler, chair; Gin Stanley, clerk. Bill Kenney, Dudley Goar, Susan Macone, Brian Cramer, Laura Sackton, Happy Goethert.

TERRY W. ROTHERMEL

330 MUSKETAQUID ROAD
CONCORD, MA 01742
(508) 369-7573

18 December 2014

Ms. Lori Capone, Assistant Natural Resources Director
Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee
c/o Concord Natural Resources Department
141 Keyes Road
Concord, MA 01742

Subject: Comments on the 2014 Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan
– A Citizen's Nudge in Preserving our Agricultural Lands

Dear Ms. Capone and Plan Committee Members:

Concord and its citizens have wisely invested in the preservation of our natural landscape and diversity over many generations. Our success in conserving our open spaces is well documented in this comprehensive plan – and most dramatically in Appendix G. Open space thus continues to be a high priority in Concord's Long Range Plans.

In addition to Concord's values for conserving our natural landscape in our Long Range Plans, there are also important Concord values associated with preserving our human landscape and diversity. My "nudge" in this letter, is addressed at one specific part of Concord's open space goals:

"How might we begin to more broadly define our open space goals when it comes to preserving our agricultural lands? "

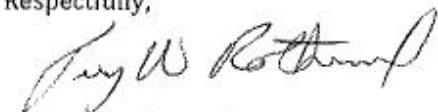
Is it possible to move from the open space goal of preserving "farmlands" towards the broader goal of preserving "farms"? Then is it possible to include insuring a role for Concord's own farmers in our efforts to preserve farming in Concord?

Is it possible to be less concerned about providing for "efficient farm operations" in the future and more concerned about conserving the heritage of "smaller farms" in our landscape?

Is it possible in our open space goals to pursue "joint land acquisition" not only with other land preservation interests, but also with interests in support of playing field recreation, affordable housing and, indeed, affordable farm housing?

Thank you for considering this "nudge" towards your consideration in this Plan of a broader framework for preserving the open spaces of Concord agriculture.

Respectfully,



Terry W. Rothermel

I write as a relatively long-term Concord resident who, among other things, has helped spearhead the town's 1992 Open Space Plan, 1995 Historic Resources Masterplan, and 2004 Open Space and Recreation Plan. It is a pleasure to express my hearty congratulations to both the 2014 Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee, and to you, for a superb Draft 2014 OSRP! The upcoming future of Concord is significantly enhanced with a document of such exceptional quality.

I think the following topics are especially strong and valuable: (1) attractive informative maps & photos throughout; (2) Open Space Framework as an organizing conceptual framework, now slowly spreading worldwide; (3) town-centered regional perspective; (4) Route 2, traffic levels, & traffic calming relative to wildlife/water/people; (5) diverse water dimensions across the town; (6) disconnect between land-use patterns/zoning & today's biodiversity/water/recreation; (7) preliminary spatial approach for vegetation & habitats; (8) helpful detail on key species; (9) highlighting of unique features in town; (10) map of "environmental challenges" in & near town; (11) listing of public & non-profit owned open space; (12) trails; and (13) appendices with lucid detailed data. Great job.

The Draft 2014 OSRP is an impressive document and valuable roadmap for the years just ahead. I have no other recommended changes. But instead I've appended some thoughts for our 2019 (?) Concord open-space and recreation planners. Thank you for your remarkable Draft 2014 Plan. This should be a model for all such plans across our Commonwealth.

Appended thoughts for a longer-term future:

- A) The Nuclear Metals superfund site (& perhaps W. R. Grace site) has such potential significant, widespread and long-term effects on biodiversity, water, and recreation in Concord and surroundings, that a scenarios approach with potential spatial effects would be quite informative.
- B) Groundwater and surface water are a single integrated resource (e.g., Winter, T. C. *et al.* 1998. USGS Circular 1139. Denver, CO), emphasizing that effects on groundwater affect water quantity/quality of surface water river/stream/pond/wetland, and vice versa...a highly useful conceptual framework for Concord's water dimensions.
- C) Water and wildlife flow/move across the town's numerous land uses, boundaries and infrastructure. Mapping these flows/movements, somewhat like a trail & sidewalk system for recreationists, though in a more flexible format recognizing change, would be highly informative.
- D) Protection and enhancement of the town's large natural areas probably now would be most enhanced by the strategic removal of buildings, both on inholdings and those projecting into the large natural areas. This would be a pioneering approach perhaps led by private initiatives.
- E) Mixed use with residential, commercial, cultural, farmland, local industry, and parkland close together, is a familiar way to reduce transportation and increase community cohesion. Perhaps Concord's greatest limitation for this are local jobs/industry, best increased in or by the existing commercial/industrial footprints, together with appealing and safe walkway/bikeway/public-transport access.
- F) When were the 100-yr, etc. flood-zones calculated/mapped, and how have they changed where, given the upriver changes in farmland/forest/development/infrastructure in recent decades?
- G) Mentioning, but not emphasizing, the control of non-native and invasive plants seems appropriate, since success is basically impossible in the face of ongoing colonizers of Boston, huge numbers in the states just to our south (some already in town), climate change, and suburbs themselves being major non-native species sources. Somewhat analogous to evaluations by school teachers and professors: "Judge a species by what it does, not its origin."
- H) The traffic levels on different roads and traffic calming, both relative to wildlife/water/recreationists, would be especially appropriate for the town-centered region approach.
- I) Again using a scenarios approach for the effects of combined climate change and town-centered-region urbanization, it would be quite useful to map potential spatial effects on biodiversity/water/recreation across the town and its surroundings.

Dorrie Kehoe - 51 MacArthur Road:

I have finished reading this excellent updating of the nearly ten year old Open Space Plan. You have provided enormous background information as well as clear plans for the future.

Because this plan deals with not only open space, but also Recreation, I have read it side by side with the Recreation Department's Facilities Strategic Plan of 2014—and have attempted to balance the two.

First of all, I am struck by the fact that Concord is particularly blessed because there is so much Open Land in Town that is owned by other than the Town: State and Federal parklands, accessible conservation lands owned by private agencies and organizations and clubs, and school spaces.

“Seen collectively, these lands provide over 220 acres of the publicly-accessible open space per thousand residents. As a result, the acquisition of addition parkland should not be a priority for the Department. **If any efforts are made for park development, it should include adding to the inventory of neighborhood park land.** (emphasis added.) Concord Recreation Facilities Strategic Plan, Page 20.

The Recreation Plan goes on to say,

“Neighborhood park land/development; according to the survey, results a very high level of interest... The Level of Service Standards shows a need for 3.5 acres of neighborhood parkland per thousand population. Currently, Concord's system for neighborhood parks includes .62 acres per thousand population.” Page 38

The Department of Natural Resources Open Space and Recreation Plan also acknowledges the importance of small neighborhood parks:

“Located within convenient walking or bicycling distance of homes, small neighborhood fields provide opportunitites for spontaneous and multi-age recreation. They also reduce the need for vehicular travel and tight scheduling by families, and additionally could reduce pressure on the existing regulation ball fields. Convenient small, informal playing fields enhance neighborhoods and provide places for neighbors to meet.”

Section 7: Analysis of Needs, Page 89.

However, the main emphasis of the DNR plan seems to be the acquisition and maintenance of larger open spaces and particularly “linkage,” i.e. connecting large parcels of open space throughout the Town and not emphasizing at all the importance of small, independent and neighborhood oriented public spaces.

Recently, I was part of a group of West Concord residents who urged that the Town to purchase a 2.2 acre parcel of land off Main Street (directly across from the entrance to Concord Greene.) The Board of Selectmen was opposed to this purchase—not only for the price—but of equal importance because it was not part of what the Board referred to as the “necklace” of contiguous lands.

I would hope that when the final Open Space and Recreation Plan is adopted it will knit together the interests of the Department of Natural Resources and also of the Recreation Department. I hope, as well, that it will emphasize the importance of neighborhood parks which are so very valuable to the ordinary citizens of the Town and which are particularly critical in densely populated areas.

Concord is truly blessed in the amount of accessible open space within the Town. For many residents, small, neighborhood parks furnish an important respite. Large tracts of land for hikers or for wildlife are important. But so, too, are small, local spaces. Many of the non-Town owners of open space in Concord (noted above) are appropriately interested in large properties. We must look to the Town to remember to “think small.” And I hope that all Town Boards and Committees will agree to adopt this joint emphasis.

David Clarke – 26 Bartlett Hill

I wish to express my commendation and thanks for the work that Lori Capone and the Committee did in producing such an excellent and thorough Open Space and Recreation Plan for Concord. I am sure that it will be of much value to the town in the coming years.



ConcordCAN! would like to commend the 2014 Open Space and Recreation Committee for their comprehensive work on the 2014 Plan. The plan identifies critical environmental concepts that must be considered in future planning, such as:

- Food and water security
- The need to adapt to and mitigate climate change
- The need to counter pressures for development with sustainable land management practices
- The special ecological characteristics of our town and their usefulness in helping to stabilize climate.

These concepts are consistent with Concord's Sustainable Municipal Principles Policy, which was officially adopted in July 2011 after earlier approval by residents at Town Meeting. ConcordCAN recommends that a copy of this policy be added to the document to highlight the Town's strong sustainability commitment, together with an explicit recommendation that the policy be used as a guide when translating the plan into action.

Secondly, ConcordCAN recommends that whenever climate change mitigation and adaptation are mentioned in the plan, the maintenance and restoration of healthy soils and ecosystems, also, be highlighted as a proactive approach that the Town and citizens may take to lessen the needs for mitigation and adaptation in the future.

By protecting and strengthening the natural ecosystems that exist in Concord and by restoring others to a natural state, the town and its citizens can help build the capacity to sequester CO₂ in the earth and reduce atmospheric levels. As a town that is noted for "the shot heard around the world", Concord has an opportunity, once again, to provide a model for other towns and cities.

Carbon sequestration, together with specific "organic" approaches to managing our land, are proven technologies that have the potential, if adopted widely, to reduce the current level of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere. They deserve a place, alongside energy efficiencies and the growing use of alternative energy, in our collective strategies for reducing the town's carbon footprint.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this wonderful plan and look forward to working with the town on an ongoing basis to help inform public opinion and increase understanding of environmental needs and responsibilities through our outreach efforts including Sustainable coffees, Speaker Series, and Panel Discussions.

Submitted by Lori Gill-Pazaris on behalf of ConcordCAN
1/14/15

Agricultural land:

Farming and agricultural land is one of the most important characteristics of the history and present benefits of the Town of Concord . We strongly encourage giving the preservation of as much as possible of our current farmed land for the use of farming. Natural Resource Commission, Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, and Town Manager should be encouraged to increase their contact with and use of advice from the town's farmers and Agricultural Committee in varied ways of preserving this valuable but steadily diminishing part of the Town's character.

Some particular agricultural lands by Old Bedford Road:

Our understanding is that some of these lands (Burke, Ammendolia) were bought by the town for 'educational purposes'. We would like it to be considered that an 'educational purpose' can be an endeavor that educates the public at large, and also that *an educational project need not necessarily be solely in the domain of the school department.*

As such, we would like to encourage that these lands be included in the open space and natural conservation plans, given their current agricultural use, and their proximity to the Gowing's Swamp. A statement was made by the chairman of the Agricultural Committee during one of the meetings of the committee where we were present in summer 2013, that Burke is especially good agricultural land. If an educational use is demanded at any point, it might be geared towards educating students and the public about agriculture and natural preservation. (There is also the archeological history of the area to consider.)

A couple years ago when an individual School Committee member was proposing that the area might be suitable for a bus depot, Naturalist and environmental expert Cherrie Corey composed a letter summarizing the sensitivities of the location. The Natural Resources Commission already has a copy of that letter, and in fact is indeed very familiar with its contents anyway, but we are attaching a copy of it, just in case. (Please see the attached copy of Ms. Corey's letter to the school committee.)

Tree preservation:

Because trees are important for wildlife habitat, erosion control, water quality and quantity, flood mitigation, town neighborhood character and natural beauty, we would like to see more efforts to reduce cutting of large numbers of trees during various public and private development or expansion work. In particular we strongly encourage the Concord Planning Board to work on putting forward measures to actively encourage the retention of mature trees.

Trails:

With regard to trails, we strongly prefer the use of natural or stone dust surfaced trails to the use of asphalt or concrete paving. The more yielding surface is better suited to walking which is the premier use of nature trails, and is more consistent with a natural environment.

Water resource management:

Citizen responses to the draft open spaces plan have placed water resources at the top of concerns. We wholeheartedly agree with this and encourage more town-wide action on the many different contributing aspects of this topic. Inventorying and tracking the increase over time of impermeable surface areas in the town, especially in areas where flooding effects have been known to occur, would be helpful.

Preservation of trees and large plantings can be encouraged. When a development project has required a ground water impact or wetlands impact report, there would be a great benefit in a follow-on after-project -completion assessment of actual impacts obtained with respect to water tables, local flooding reports, etc.

What are we losing/what have we lost over time?

A very important suggestion was raised by a citizen at the Open Space Plan review presented at the Harvey Wheeler Center recently, namely, what open spaces have we lost to development over time, say since 2000? We think it would be extremely helpful information for the citizens of Concord , to have a tabulation, not only of the success stories of areas preserved, but of the overall picture over time of the "lost opportunities" or if you prefer, of the "competing uses". For example, agricultural land once converted to a housing development, rarely if ever comes into farming again. The same can be said for forested land. Surely there is public record information that could be utilized to present a timeline overview of certain changes in land use in the Town over history, either recent or longer term. A table by year of open acres subdivided and built over is a simple example. If town staff is not available for this correlation work, then perhaps volunteers or students of environmental or town planning could help.